

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MASERU 01089 111239Z

41

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-05 MC-02 INT-05

COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 /091 W
----- 082066

R 110956Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5254

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 1089

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LT, BC

SUBJECT: LESOTHO EXILED OPPOSITION LEADER BREAKS SILENCE IN
BOTSWANA

REF: A. MASERU 766; B. MASERU 507 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS OCTOBER 10, NTSU MOKHEKLE, LEADER IN EXILE OF THE OPPOSITION BASUTOLAND CONGRESS PARTY (BCP), HAS PUBLICLY SPOKEN OUT IN BOTSWANA AGAINST GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO. MOKHEKLE CALLED ON HIS FOLLOWERS IN LESOTHO TO PERSEVERE IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE. NATURE OF MOKHEKLE'S STATEMENTS AND FACT THAT MADE IN BOTSWANA ARE LIKELY TO COMPLICATE LESOTHO/ BOTSWANA RELATIONS AND PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN'S EFFORTS TOWARD RECONCILIATION AT HOME. END SUMMARY.

2. "RAND DAILY MAIL" OCTOBER 10 CARRIED REPORT OF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MASERU 01089 111239Z

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW OF MOKHEKLE BY MAIL'S DENNIS GORDON

CONDUCTED AT TLOKWENG, VILLAGE NEAR GABORONE. MOKHEKLE QUOTED AS SENDING MESSAGE TO BCP FOLLOWERS IN LESOTHO, CONGRATULATING THEM ON THEIR TENACITY IN FACE OF OPPRESSION, WHICH HAD THROWN JONATHAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS INTO DISARRAY, COMMISERATING WITH THEM IN THEIR SUFFERING, AND PREDICTING HE WOULD MEET THEM SOON IN LESOTHO TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF THEIR STRUGGLE. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT LESOTHO HAD SENT 400 MEN TO IRAN FOR MILITARY TRAINING, ANOTHER 10 TO GHANA FOR COUNTER-ESPIONAGE TRAINING, AND THAT ARMS HAD BEEN IMPORTED FROM IRAN.

3. ALSO ON OCTOBER 10, "BLOEMFONTEIN FRIEND", IN SAPA ARTICLE DATED GABORONE, REPORTED THAT MOKHEKLE, WHO LIVES IN EXILE IN ZAMBIA, WAS IN GABORONE TO ATTEND FUNERAL OF COLLEAGUE. MOKHEKLE REPORTEDLY SAID HE WOULD JOIN A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN LESOTHO IF CERTAIN DEMANDS WERE MET, E.G., EACH PARTY SHOULD NOMINATE ITS OWN MEMBERS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE A LIMITED PERIOD OF EXISTENCE. MOKHEKLE REPORTEDLY CHARACTERIZED PRESENT GOVERNMENT AS A "CHEAT" AND SAID ASSISTANCE FROM FOREIGN DONORS HAD DROPPED FOR THIS REASON.

4. GOL PROMPTLY ISSUED STATEMENT THAT, IF PRESS REPORTS ACCURATE, IT MUST TAKE "SERIOUS VIEW" OF SUCH CHARGES BEING MADE IN FRIENDLY COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY AS MOKHEKLE IS WANTED AT HOME TO FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES. SAID REPORTS ON MILITARY TRAINING AND ARMS WERE "SPECULATIVE" BUT IN ANY CASE SUCH ACTIVITIES WERE PREROGATIVE OF GOL. SAID MOKHEKLE'S REMARKS WERE CONTRARY TO SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION AND WERE SURPRISING SINCE TWO OF HIS PRINCIPAL DEPUTIES IN LESOTHO ARE IN FAVOR OF PRIME MINISTER'S POLICY OF FORMING A NATIONAL (I.E., COALITION) GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT. MOKHEKLE FLED LESOTHO AFTER THE ABORTIVE 1974 BCP COUP ATTEMPT. IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF HIS STATEMENT IN BOTSWANA IS LIKELY TO BE WORSENING OF LESOTHO/BOTSWANA RELATIONS. STORE OF GOOD WILL BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY DEPLETED IN PAST YEAR AND HALF BECAUSE OF DISAGREEMENTS OVER DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND, DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TWO GOVERNMENTS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MASERU 01089 111239Z

HAVE TAKEN OVER "DETENTE" IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND FACT THAT MANY REFUGEES FROM LESOTHO MADE THEIR WAY TO OR THROUGH BOTSWANA IN WAKE OF 1974 ATTEMPTED COUP AGAINST GOL.

6. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER MOKHEKLE'S STATEMENTS MADE WITH APPROVAL OF GOB. IF SO, IT WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM BOTSWANA'S POLICY OF NOT ALLOWING ITS

TERRITORY TO BE USED BY EXILED LEADERS OR REFUGEES FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

7. MOKHEKLE'S STATEMENT MAY HINDER JONATHAN'S EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT RECONCILIATION AT HOME BY MEANS OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT. THERE HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT REPORTS AND OTHER INDICATIONS THAT JONATHAN INTENDS TO BRING G. P. RAMOREBOLI, LEADER OF MODERATE WING OF BCP, INTO THE CABINET. MOKHEKLE IS STILL VERY POPULAR IN LESOTHO, ESPECIALLY AMONG COMMON PEOPLE AND RANK AND FILE OF BCP. HIS SPEAKING OUT AT THIS TIME IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO DISCOURAGE ANY BCP LEADER FROM JOINING JONATHAN GOVERNMENT.

8. WE HAVE HAD PREVIOUS REPORTS THAT IRAN WOULD PROVIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO LESOTHO BUT HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THAT ANY MATERIAL OR TRAINING HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN FURNISHED. CHINESE AMBASSADOR IN LESOTHO TOLD US OCTOBER 10 THAT IRAN HAD INDEED SENT SHIPMENT OF ARMS TO LESOTHO IN HERCULES C-130 WHICH BROUGHT IRANIAN MILITARY DELEGATION TO LESOTHO INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS OCTOBER 4. THAT IRANIAN C-130 CARRING DELEGATION TO LESOTHO LANDED IN SOUTH AFRICA WAS CONFIRMED IN PRESS. IN INTERESTING COINCIDENCE, GOL MINISTER AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 4 THAT 400 BASOTHO MIGHT GO UNDER CONTRACT TO IRAN AS HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVERS AND THAT GHANA HAD REQUESTED BASOTHO MINERS TO WORK IN COALFIELDS THERE.

9. REFERENCE IN GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT TO "PRIME MINISTER'S POLICY OF FORMING A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT" IS FIRST OFFICIAL STATEMENT THAT THIS IS HIS POLICY.
BOLEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: OPPOSITION PARTIES, POLITICAL LEADERS, EXILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MASERU01089
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750354-1013
From: MASERU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751060/aaaacayq.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MASERU 766, 75 MASERU 507
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LESOTHO EXILED OPPOSITION LEADER BREAKS SILENCE IN BOTSWANA
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LT, BC, (MOKHELKE, NTSU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006